

NTU POLICY

Title:	Staff and Student Personal Relationships Policy
Approved by:	Academic Board
Approved on:	20 June 2018

1. Overall introduction

- 1.1 The University is committed to the maintenance of the highest professional and ethical standards between members of staff and students.
- 1.2 This policy sits as part of a framework of institutional policies that are designed to support, protect and govern expected standards of behaviour between staff and student, in order that NTU is able to preserve a learning and work environment that reflects our professional and ethical standards.
- 1.3 A list of relevant policies that interact and form the framework can be found at section 5 of this policy.

2. Scope and purpose

- 2.1 This policy outlines the University's position on relationships between members of staff and students at NTU.
- 2.2 In the context of this document, a Personal Relationship is defined as a sexual/romantic relationship. Relationships between family members, close friendships or business/commercial relationships are governed through the University's conflicts of interest policy.
- 2.3 A Professional Relationship is defined as:
 - an assessing, supervising, tutoring, mentoring, teaching role; or
 - a pastoral role; or
 - an administrative, service or technical support role; or
 - a coaching role.
- 2.4 It is recognised that pre-existing relationships may be in existence across the University. These should be reviewed in the context of the guidance contained within this policy.

3. Relationships between Staff and Students

- 3.1 The University's starting position is that members of staff should not enter into a Personal Relationship that is sexual and/or romantic in nature with a student. This is because such a relationship could compromise, or be perceived to compromise, the requirement for trust and confidence and professionalism which underpins the learning experience for students.
- 3.2 Notwithstanding point 3.1 above, if a member of staff does have a Personal Relationship with a student, the member of staff has a responsibility to inform the Relevant Authority as defined in section 4.1 below as soon as is reasonably practicable.

- 3.3 In recognising the need to exercise professional standards of behaviour and conduct the member of staff must take steps to separate themselves from any Professional Relationship and all of their responsibilities towards that student. This expectation is required of all staff regardless of seniority.
- 3.4 This action is intended to protect both parties and the University.
- 3.5 The Relevant Authority, will determine the appropriate action to be taken which will take into account the nature of the Professional Relationship between the member of staff and the student and will include ensuring that the member of staff concerned is not involved in inter alia:
- the admission, supervision, assessment or examination of the student; or
 - in decisions relating to rewarding or penalising the student; or
 - decisions regarding personal or financial support, allocation of accommodation or access to services or facilities.

The Relevant Authority will advise HR of the Personal Relationship who will record this on the member of staff's personnel file.

- 3.6 Failure to disclose a Personal Relationship between a member of staff and a student and/or failure to comply with action deemed by the Relevant Authority as appropriate to deal with such a situation may result in disciplinary action being taken against the member of staff concerned.
- 3.7 Staff should be aware that under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 it is an offence for any person aged 18 or over to engage in any sexual activity with a person aged under 18 where they are in a position of trust in relation to that person. A position of trust includes involvement in caring for, training, supervising young people under 18 who are receiving education from an educational institution. Further guidance on this matter is contained in the University's Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Policy and Guidance.
- 3.8 In the event that the relationship breaks down, parties are expected to fulfil their duties and roles, whether staff or student, and maintain appropriate standards of professional conduct and behaviour.
- 3.9 Any such declared relationship between a member of staff and a student should not prejudice the raising of a complaint under the University's Student Complaints' Policy and Procedure and/or Student Code of Behaviour should there be a legitimate need to do so.

4. Reporting Procedure Process

- 4.1 The relevant and appropriate authority for each category of staff is as detailed in the table below.

Structure Levels: Relevant and Appropriate Reporting Authority	
Staff Member	Relevant Authority
Member of Staff in Schools	Dean of School
Member of staff in College	Head of College

Dean of School	Head of College (PVC)
Members of staff in professional service	Head of Service
Heads of Service	Director of Service (usually the Line Manager)
UET (Service)	COOR
UET (Academic including COOR)	Vice-Chancellor
Vice-Chancellor	Chair of Board

4.2 Arrangements that have been determined by the Relevant Authority to safeguard all parties will need to be reviewed annually, or earlier if the need should arise, to ensure they remain relevant, appropriate and effective.

5. Framework of Relevant and Interacting University Policies

5.1 Framework of relevant policies that interact with the Personal Relationships Policy:

- Dignity and Respect Policy;
- Section 17 E Student Complaints;
- Student Code of Behaviour
- Section 4 of the Exam Board Regulations;
- Safeguarding Policy and Guidance;
- Staff Disciplinary;
- Conflict of Interest Policy;
- Public Interest (Whistle Blowing) Policy; and
- Student Charter.

6. Sources of Support, Advice and Guidance

6.1 In the recognition that the issues contained within this Personal Relationships Policy can be complex and sensitive the table below sign posts where staff and students can seek further support, advice and guidance from within the University.

Staff	Students
Human Resources	Student Services
Trade Unions	Students' Union
Academic Registry	Academic Registry
Governance and Legal Services	Student Counselling Services
Employee Assistance Programme	